Rev.d Amos A. Phelps

Boston

Jews held their slaves as property, & they did this by force of a municipal regulation established by the Deity - by virtue of a "divine law" which remained unrepealed upon their statute book certainly till the advent of the Saviour. I feel confident that you will not deny that this law to wh I have referred does as did authorize slavery as you define it - you cannot deny that God is the author of this law. If then it be a sin in all circumstances, I think that in some of them at least it cannot, with such authority to justify it, be "exceeding sinful".

Do you really suppose that those nations or communities that have been destroyed by insurrections of their slaves were thus punished for the sin of slavery? - Was "Tyre" destroyed for this sin only or chiefly? I read the ss. differently -

You will not understand me as quoting the authority of the ss. in defence of slavery in all circumstances. I believe on the contrary that it can be justified in no case when inconsistent with the "golden rule" of doing as in like circumstances we would be done by -

I am not a sheep of your flock and have therefore but feeble claims to your attention, but if you deem me impertinent in thus intruding on your notice I am persuaded you will attribute it to an error of judgment & believe at least that I address you with feelings of unfeigned kindness and perfect respect

Yours Truly
A. D. Parker

of those who read it—

May I be permitted, without being thought impertinent, to venture a few observations on your second Lecture? The subject is one to which I have devoted much time and thought & labor, and in which I feel no ordinary interest. Still I should be silent had I lost confidence in the purity of your motives or lost respect for your understanding; or did I not feel the most solemn conviction that the Party to which you are lending your countenance is doing incalculable, if not irreparable mischief to those very interests that which it affects to advocate.

Your present views rest upon the assumption that Slavery "is in all circumstances a sin", and admitting your premises I find no fault with your logic. Now I hope to induce you to re-examine this subject by convincing you that this fundamental principle is unsound. Slavery is 'holding man as property' or 'an assumed right of property in man &'. I will not quarrel with this definition tho' I do not assent to it. Do you then, on reflection, really believe that Abraham 'held his servants as property' - that he did not both in theory & practice, not those exert 'assume a right of property in those whom he had "bought with his money"? But Abraham was not infallible - his authority or example is not conclusive. "What then "saith the Lord"? I refer you to Leviticus XXV. 39 - to the end of the Chapter, but more particularly to verses 44. 5. & 6, and I ask you whether by any process of reasoning, or any principle of Biblical exegesis you can avoid the conclusion that, in those verses, the "holding of men as property" is expressly authorised by God himself? I admit that Jewish Slavery is not American Slavery but differs in other respects as they may, still the

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Boston 20th July 1833

My Dear Sir

I suggested to you the other evening that both Wilberforce & Pitt were decidedly opposed to "immediate emancipation", and that the language which you quoted from them was by them applied exclusively to the Slave Trade. Will you permit me to support these assertions by the following references. Your quotation from Wilberforce you will find in his celebrated Speech of 1791. contained in Clarkson's "History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade" Vol. II. page 291. His opinion of "immediate emancipation" may be found in the same Speech page 283. The sentiments of Mr Pitt on "immediate Emancipation" you will find in the same Volume, passim & particularly at page 249. - See also p. 263. A part of your quotation from Pitt you will find pp. 336-7. An examination of these references cannot fail to convince you beyond the possibility of doubt that Wilberforce & Pitt (to say nothing of Fox and Burke & Clarkson & Granville &c &c) are not authorities in favor of "immediate abolition". The opinion even of great & good men prove nothing, but still I should be sorry to see the weight which justly their due & which you obviously attach to them, thrown into the wrong scale... It may be said that the language you have quoted from W. & P. is as applicable to Slavery as to the Slave-trade. Be it so - all I now say is, that it was not so in the estimation